



***A School Visitation Project***

**Executive Summary**

**Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction  
Elizabeth Burmaster, State Superintendent**

# School – 2 – School Visitations



What is the School-2-School Visitation Program? School-2-School (S2S), provides a framework, contacts, and guidelines for conducting inter-school visitations for the purpose of improving student achievement. It provides an opportunity for SIFI schools to visit other schools for the purpose of improving student achievement.

To assist both the sending and receiving schools the following guide points have been established:

## 1. Visiting Schools – Before you go

- a. Make sure you define the reason or purpose of your visit. Staff members should understand and be familiar with the needs at their home school site so as to have a clear understanding of what they are looking for during the visitation.
- b. Many New Wisconsin Promise schools are available for visitation as well as other sites that have demonstrated long term student academic success. The sites currently available for visitation are listed on the DPI website at <http://www.dpi.wi.gov/sst/s2s.html>.
- c. Schools should select their visitation team members to include the principal, curricular leaders, and school improvement team members. The actual number of staff involved is dependent on the visitation purpose and the capacity of the host site.
- d. Visitations can be scheduled at mutually agreeable dates and times between the two schools. DPI will help coordinate the visitation arrangements as requested. Your DPI contact person is Berland Meyer at 608-266-5197 or [berland.meyer@dpi.state.wi.us](mailto:berland.meyer@dpi.state.wi.us).
- e. Most visitations will occur in the morning and may extend into the early afternoon. (A draft schedule of a typical visitation is attached for reference.)
- f. When making a visitation be sure everyone knows the purpose and focus of the event. Each visiting school should develop questions in advance that help the school improvement team look for elements that have helped the host site become successful in improving student achievement. Also ....
  - Guiding questions that focus the team on key areas of importance help to make sure everyone is on the same page.
  - Review your own school's data and school profile information prior to conducting the visit.
  - In some cases it may be beneficial to divide the observation responsibilities and areas of interest between team members.

- g. The Principal's responsibility is to provide leadership and direction to the team before, during, and after the visitation.**
- h. As you make the final arrangements for your visit be sure you have:**
  - made appropriate transportation arrangements;**
  - arranged for substitute teachers and they have been assigned;**
  - contacted the host school principal with your final plans and schedule;**
  - meals have been arranged (if necessary);**
  - appropriate dress for the day has been discussed;**
  - and, the team understands the reason(s) for the visitation.**

## **2. Visiting Schools - During the visit**

- a. Arrive on time at your host school.**
- b. Meet with the host principal to learn about the school's successes, organization, and demographics.**
- c. Ask initial clarifying questions that help define your purpose.**
- d. Divide into small subgroups that allow you to observe discreetly but not interfere with the school's program or student's learning environment.**
- e. Keeping on schedule, rotate throughout your assigned area(s) being sure to absorb the entire educational environment.**
- f. Respect confidentiality of students' work.**
- g. Arrange a time to de-brief your visit with the host principal.**

## **3. Visiting Schools – After the visit**

- a. The principal should arrange for a time to gather the visitation team and review the visitation experience.**
- b. Review what was seen by each individual.**
- c. Review the established purpose of the visitation and discuss the observation in conjunction with the intent of the visitation.**
- d. Establish a list of "key learnings" from the visitation.**
- e. Discuss which of these learning could be useful to your school**
- f. Discuss what could be useful in individual classrooms.**
- g. Agree to what the next steps are to improving student achievement at your school.**

#### **4. Host Schools – Before the visit**

- a. Make sure you and your staff understand the purpose of the visitation and the reason they had for selecting your school. Have a clear understanding what the visitors are looking for and what your staff and programs offer that might meet their needs. Make sure that those programs are available to them during their visit.**
- b. Review your daily schedules and determine any changes need to take place.**
- c. Determine which classrooms / areas will be available to visitors and at what times. Also be sure to have a plan for managing the rotation of visitors from area to area.**
- d. If your visitors are staying for lunch be sure to have made arrangements for them to eat together. Visitors' lunch costs are reimbursable to the visiting school so they will pay any costs associated with their lunch. If your staff members join them during a working lunch, your costs will be reimbursed as well.**

#### **5. Host Schools – During the visit**

- a. Determine where you will meet with the visiting staff.**
- b. When your visitors arrive the Principal should meet with them for 20-30 minutes to explain the school's instructional program, staff development initiatives, school schedule, and to define relevant student demographics.**
- c. Remind visitors about confidentiality issues and assign them to the visitation schedule. Keep to the schedule**
- d. Rotate among the visiting groups during the day and answer their questions. Point out instructional elements and practices pertaining to their visitation's purpose.**
- e. Following the formal visitation period the principal should meet again with the visitors to answer any final questions prior to the team's departure.**
- f. Determine what other information the visitors need from you and how you will get it to them.**

#### **6. Host Schools – After the visit**

- a. Visitations offer opportunities for mutual learning. Determine what you learned from the visiting school.**
- b. Determine what data do you still need to provide to the visitors and who will send it to them.**
- c. Decide what kind of follow-up connection you will make with the school.**

**7. A typical visitation agenda:**

**a. Full Day Visitation:**

- 8:30 AM - Arrive at the host school
- 8:30 – 9:00 AM – Introductions and orientation by the host school Principal
- 9:00 – 11:30 AM – Visit instructional areas on a 30 or 45 minute rotation
- 11:30 AM – 12:30 PM - lunch at the host school with Host Principal and staff
- 12:30 – 2:00 PM – Continue visitation rotation
- 2:00 – 2:30 PM – Exit conference with Host School Principal
- 2:30 PM – Leave for home school

**b. Half Day Visitation:**

- 8:30 AM - Arrive at the host school
- 8:30 – 9:00 AM – Introductions and orientation by the host school Principal
- 9:00 – 11:30 AM – Visit instructional areas on a 30 or 45 minute rotation
- 11:30 AM – Noon – Exit conference with Host School Principal
- Noon – Leave for home school

**8. What support is available for this program?**

**a. Visiting Schools – DPI will ...**

- support your school visitation by assisting with a Pre-visitation meeting at your school.
- assist you in the preparation of relevant materials for the visitation.
- assist you in determining which site to visit and in making arrangements.
- assist you in conducting a follow-up session after the visit at your school.
- provide funding for transportation, meals, and substitute teacher costs associated with a visitation.

**b. Host Schools – DPI will ...**

- provide liaison assistance with the visiting school.
- provide a Visitation materials
- provide funding for host site teacher release time and meal costs associated with the visitation. DPI will also provide financial support for any materials provided for visiting schools.

## 9. Resource materials

- a. The School Improvement Planning Tool by DPI  
[www.dpi.state.wi.us/sig/improvement/process.html](http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/sig/improvement/process.html)
- b. School Climate Surveys for Students by DPI  
[www.dpi.state.wi.us/sig/improvement/process.html](http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/sig/improvement/process.html)
- c. Guiding Questions for Visitations, Architects of Achievement  
<http://www.smallschoolsproject.org/PDFS/visitations.pdf>
- d. Wisconsin Information Network for Successful Schools (WINSS)  
<http://www.dpi.wi.gov/sig/index.html>
- e. New Wisconsin Promise Schools – 2005  
[http://dpi.wi.gov/eis/pdf/dpi2005\\_117.pdf](http://dpi.wi.gov/eis/pdf/dpi2005_117.pdf)
- f. Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools, Dr. Terry Bergeson, State Superintendent, Washington Public Schools  
<http://www.k12.wa.us/research/pubdocs/pdf/9charactfor%20SIP.pdf>
- g. Characteristics of Improved School Districts, Dr. Terry Bergeson, State Superintendent, Washington Public Schools  
<http://www.k12.wa.us/research/pubdocs/DistrictImprovementReport.pdf>
- h. Voices in Urban Education – High School Reform, Annenberg Institute for School Reform  
<http://www.annenberginstitute.org/VUE/summer05/Warren.html>
- i. Seeing Through New Eyes, National Staff Development Council  
<http://www.nsdc.org/library/publications/tools/tools10-01rich.cfm>

### What do I do to participate in this program?

To schedule a School-2-School visitation go to the DPI web site at <http://www.dpi.wi.gov/sst/s2s.html> . Review the schools that are available for visitations and identify those that satisfy your purpose. Fill out the on-line form and submit it to Berland Meyer at DPI ([berland.meyer@dpi.state.wi.us](mailto:berland.meyer@dpi.state.wi.us)). DPI will contact the school(s) you've selected regarding their availability and willingness to host a visit for your school.